

Members of the Appropriations Committee,

The proposed \$2,000,000 cut to the state parks already meager budget is a travesty to the parks and an insult to the people of CT, it needs to be reversed!

Having been an active user throughout my life and an active friend and supporter of CT's state park system for the past 31 years, I have seen it all park closings, threatened park closings, unsafe conditions for visitors and deteriorated equipment and buildings. During those years the % of CT's budget spent on state parks has been the lowest, or in a good year 49th lowest of the 50 states, in how LITTLE it spends on its parks. The budget released last week will drop CT to a level that may well be unprecedented in the United States.

Keeping the parks open, making do with little resources throughout recent decades, has been an extremely dedicated staff throughout the DEEP State Parks Division. What senior management, park managers and seasonal employees are able to do on a woeful budget is remarkable. And park friends groups supply tremendous resources and perform significant volunteer work, all at no cost to the State.

Cutting the state parks budget by \$2,000,000 will be approximately a 17% decrease. This cut would likely reduce seasonal employee funding by 2/3s, from 550 to 180, and mean most state parks would have to close or operate in a very reduced manner, negatively impact local economies, endanger visiting public (people will use their parks whether open or not), and potentially lead to increasing violations, environmental damage and further degradation of aging buildings, signage and amenities.

Please act to promptly reverse this decrease. If anything, this already meager budget needs to be increased.

Randall Miller
22 Forest Way
East Haddam, CT 06423

And

1175 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, CT 06517

Sleeping Giant Park Association - Board Member Friends of CT State Parks - Board Member